

Venue:
Community

Goal:
Eliminate Exposure
to Secondhand Smoke

Activity:
C4.09 Secondhand
Smoke – Assessment
or Special Survey

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	Kitsap	Pierce
• Population (Census 2000):	231,969	700,820
• Total Number of Households (Census 2000):	86,419	260,800
• Adult Cigarette Smoking Prevalence (BRFSS/ATS 2003):	25 percent	26 percent
• Estimated Number of Adult Cigarette Smokers (DOH 2004):	42,600	132,100

Marketplace Advocacy for Smoke-free Apartments

Project Description

The Kitsap and Tacoma-Pierce county health departments partnered to survey apartment managers and residents about secondhand smoke. Owners and managers were educated about the issues and the benefits of smoke-free apartments to encourage implementation of voluntary smoke-free policies.

Inputs Rationale

- Renters have expressed a desire for smoke-free housing but there is a lack of smoke-free, multi-family rentals in the Puget Sound area.
- Studies have identified smoke-free policies and regulations as an effective method to reduce residential and child exposure to secondhand smoke.¹
- Although most studies have been about smoking bans in work places, more research now is available about the benefits of smoking restrictions in apartments. An earlier study of renters in Minnesota showed more than half of non-smokers experienced secondhand smoke infiltrating their apartments. Seventy-nine percent preferred that their building be smoke-free.²
- The Fresh Air Apartments project was modeled after local restaurant campaigns that identified smoke-free venues and used marketing and education to present Fresh Air establishments as desirable.
- State and local programs often are faced with the need to create voluntary policy change within a free market atmosphere. By adopting the strategies of regional partnerships, data gathering, appropriate education, and focused marketing, there can be marked shifts in voluntary policy change.

¹ Source: Hovell MJ, Zakarian JM, Wahlgren DR, Matt GE. Reducing children's exposure to environmental tobacco smoke: the empirical evidence and directions for future research. *Tob Control* 2000; 9 (Suppl II):iii47 and *The Community Guide to Preventive Services: Tobacco Use and Exposure*. www.thecommunityguide.org

² Source: Hennrikus D, Pentel PR, Sandell SD. Preferences and practices among renters regarding smoking restrictions in apartment buildings. *Tob Control* 2003; 12: 189-194

Target Audiences

- Primary: Landlords and managers were both a source of data on available smoke-free housing and an audience for education and media campaign messages.
- Secondary: Renters were a source of data on tenant preferences and an audience for media campaign messages.

Resources

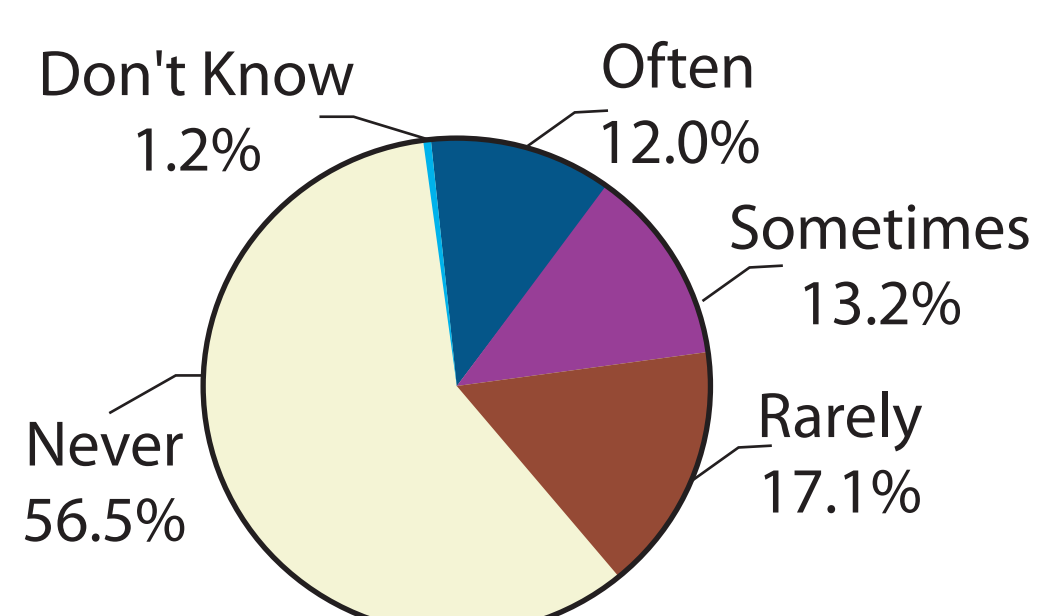
- **Staff**
• One Kitsap County Health Department and two Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department staff were involved.
• The initial stage of the project took about eight months.

Funding

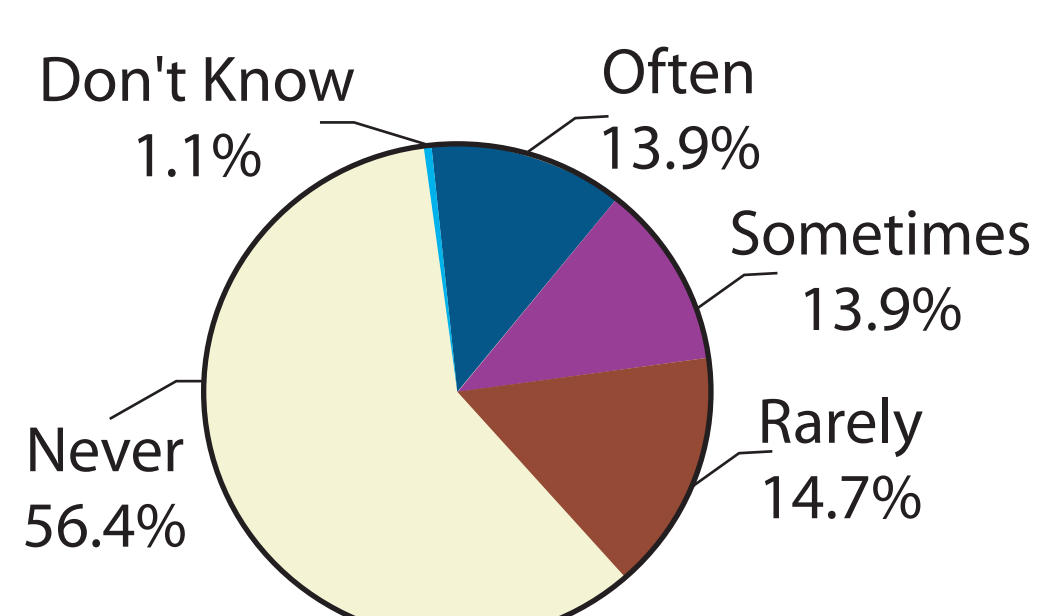
- Funding was provided through the state Tobacco Prevention and Control Program enhancement funds.
- Pacific Market Research conducted the random digit phone survey of more than 1,000 tenants. Cost was \$31,000.
- \$4,000 was spent to develop and print educational materials. These are now being adopted statewide.
- During the first year of the grant, one smoke-free apartment newspaper ad was placed in each county for a cost of \$700.

Partnerships

- Kitsap and Tacoma-Pierce county tobacco staff met to brainstorm a potential project. Kitsap provided grant-writing services. Kitsap provided .3 FTE of coordination time and monitored subcontractors. Tacoma-Pierce County staff researched existing survey and educational materials and provided tabulation for the renter survey. Both counties surveyed their own rental owners and did separate educational presentations, smoke-free apartment registries, and apartment ads.



How often does the smell of tobacco smoke get into your home from somewhere else



Exposure to movement of secondhand smoke in vulnerable households

Activities

1. Staff from the two county health departments believed that it would be more effective to encourage voluntary policy change than seek mandatory policies for private property.
2. The project team also determined that empirical information was needed and two surveys were created: A10-minute telephone survey of adults living in multi-family rentals to gather evidence on the need for smoke-free apartments and a paper survey of apartment managers and property management companies.
3. Pacific Market Research was hired to conduct the telephone survey and county staff surveyed apartment managers and property management companies. Staff found contacts using telephone books and information from the local rental owners associations.
4. The Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department analyzed the survey data.
5. Apartment managers who indicated that their facilities were smoke-free were re-contacted to determine the specific policies in their buildings and their willingness to be listed on a Smoke-free Housing Registry for their region. Registries were created for Kitsap and Pierce counties to make information on smoke-free apartments easily accessible to the public.
6. Educational materials were developed for apartment owners and managers.
7. To change community norms, an advertising campaign was conducted to highlight available smoke-free housing and the apartment registries.

Outputs

1. The tenant telephone survey in Pierce and Kitsap counties was completed by 1,106 adults.
2. Staff mailed 920 written surveys to apartment managers and property management companies.
3. Results of the survey were presented during a press conference attended by Secretary of Health Mary Selecky, staff, and several dozen stakeholders.
4. An article, "Smoke-Free Policies Are Market Savvy, Cost Conscious," was published in the NW Property Management News – a newsletter for apartment property owners with a circulation of 17,000 throughout the state. The article described the results of the surveys and the benefits of going smoke-free.
5. Staff highlighted ten smoke-free properties in Kitsap and nine in Pierce counties on the registry. Registries were posted on the Web sites of both counties. Pierce County's site also contained educational materials for apartment owners and managers about the benefits, laws, and facts around smoke-free housing including:
 - Owners and managers – It's your decision: A blue print for fresh-air housing
 - Providing fresh-air housing
 - Providing smoke-free rental units: A guide for building owners and managers
 - Secondhand smoke in apartments and condos: A guide for owners and managers
 - The smoker next door... Handling unwanted tobacco smoke in apartments and condos
 - Model policy for a smoke-free condo or apartment
 - Frequently asked questions
 - Sample of tenant phone survey in Pierce and Kitsap counties



Evaluation

The following results are from the 2003 telephone survey of adults living in multi-unit housing.

- Rental housing does not protect residents from the contaminants generated outside of their own units. Almost half (42 percent) of respondents reported that the smell of secondhand smoke gets into their rental residence from somewhere else (invasive secondhand smoke).
- Almost three-fourths of residents who had invasive secondhand smoke in their homes said it bothers them. Some (7 percent) were so bothered that they were thinking about moving.
- Young children, the elderly, and people with chronic illnesses are at particular risk because of the harmful impacts on immature or compromised lungs. Almost half of the households with these vulnerable populations experienced invasive secondhand smoke in their home.
- Minorities, low-income housing tenants, and young children were more likely to suffer. Multifamily rental residents who lived in low-income housing, people of color, or children under the age of five were more likely to be exposed to invasive secondhand smoke.

Lessons Learned

- Many owners still have the misconception that smoke-free apartments are discriminatory and therefore illegal. It seems that smoke-free apartments are as novel an idea as smoke-free restaurants were 15 years ago. We believe it is important to educate tenants and owners by listing existing smoke-free apartments as well as providing educational material.
- Get a registry up, even if it's small, and begin to change community norms.
- Kitsap and Pierce staff had a good record of working together. This project gave us an opportunity to extend beyond what either of us could do by ourselves. Our data gives the strong message that Washington state tenants want smoke-free living options.
- This is the second year in the three-year grant. We will continue smoke-free apartment work in the future.